ORIGINAL

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CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
BY: PMZ DEPUTY

Attorneys for Plaintiff

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

BARBARA HUBBARD, Plaintiff, vs. HOMETOWN BUFFET, INC. dba HOMETOWN BUFFET #0703; LAKHA PROPERTIES - SAN DIEGO, LLC, Defendants.	No. '07 CV 2303 DMS RBB **Plaintiff's Complaint**

CR

I. SUMMARY

1. This is a civil rights action by plaintiff Barbara Hubbard ("Hubbard") for discrimination at the building, structure, facility, complex, property, land, development, and/or surrounding business complex known as:

Hometown Buffet #0703
5881 University Avenue
San Diego, CA 92115
(hereafter "the Restaurant")

2. Hubbard seeks damages, injunctive and declaratory relief, attorney fees and costs, against Hometown Buffet, Inc. dba Hometown Buffet #0703 and Lakha Properties - San Diego, LLC (collectively "Hometown Buffet") pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.), and related California statutes.

II. JURISDICTION

3. This Court has original jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 for ADA claims.

4. Supplemental jurisdiction for claims brought under parallel California law—arising from the same nucleus of operative facts—is predicated on 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

5. Hubbard's claims are authorized by 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

III. VENUE

6. All actions complained of herein take place within the jurisdiction of the United States District Court, Southern District of California, and venue is invoked pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), (c).

IV. PARTIES

7. Hometown Buffet owns, operates, or leases the Restaurant, and consists of a person (or persons), firm, or corporation.

8. Hubbard has multiple conditions that affect one or more major life functions. Plaintiff requires the use of motorized wheelchair and a mobility-equipped vehicle, when traveling about in public. Consequently, Hubbard is "physically disabled," as defined by all applicable California and United States laws, and a member of the public whose rights are protected by these laws.

V. FACTS

9. The Restaurant is an establishment serving food and drink, open to the public, which is intended for nonresidential use and whose operation affects commerce.

10. Hubbard visited the Restaurant and encountered barriers (both physical and intangible) that interfered with—if not outright denied—her ability to use and enjoy the goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the facility. To the extent known by Hubbard, the barriers at the Hometown Buffet included, but are not limited to, the following:

- The van accessible parking stall does not have a separate sign stating "van accessible;"
- The access aisle is littered with cracks in the pavement that create abrupt changes in elevation and well as disrupting the smooth surface;
- The entrance door requires too much force to open;
- The entrance door lacks an International Symbol of Accessiblity;
- The cash register / hostess' counter is too high;
- There is no seating designated as being accessible;
- The seating available does not provide sufficient toe or knee clearance;
- The soda and drink machines are located on counters that are too high and out of reach range;

- The door to the women's restroom requires too much pressure to operate;
- The accessible stall door in the women's restroom is not self-closing;
- The handle on the stall door requires pinching and grasping;
- There is no handle on the interior of the stall door;
- There is insufficient clearing in front of the water closet;
- The stall door swings toward the water closet, causing the entire stall to be too small;
- The toilet tissue dispenser protrudes into the clear floor space needed at the water closet;
- There is not 18 inches of clear space between the side wall and the lavatory;
- The pipes underneath the lavatory are not wrapped or insulated in any way to prevent burns;
- The operable portion of the paper towel dispense is mounted more than 40 inches from the floor;
- The soap dispenser is not accessible due to the trash receptacle and is out of reach range; and,
- The exit door requires too much pressure to operate.

These barriers prevented Hubbard from enjoying full and equal access.

11. Hubbard was also deterred from visiting the Restaurant because she knew that the Restaurant's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations were unavailable to physically disabled patrons (such as herself). She continues to be deterred from visiting the Restaurant because of the future threats of injury created by these barriers.

12. Hubbard also encountered barriers at the Restaurant, which violate state and federal law, but were unrelated to her disability. Nothing within this

Complaint, however, should be construed as an allegation that Hubbard is seeking to remove barriers unrelated to her disability.

13. Hometown Buffet knew that these elements and areas of the Restaurant were inaccessible, violate state and federal law, and interfere with (or deny) access to the physically disabled. Moreover, Hometown Buffet has the financial resources to remove these barriers from the Restaurant (without much difficulty or expense), and make the facility accessible to the physically disabled. To date, however, Hometown Buffet refuses to either remove those barriers or seek an unreasonable hardship exemption to excuse non-compliance.

14. At all relevant times, Hometown Buffet has possessed and enjoyed sufficient control and authority to modify the subject property to remove impediments to wheelchair access and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines and Title 24 regulations. Hometown Buffet has not removed such impediments and has not modified the subject property to conform to accessibility standards. Hometown Buffet has intentionally maintained the subject property in its current condition and has intentionally refrained from altering the subject property so that it complies with the accessibility standards.

15. Hubbard further alleges that the (continued) presence of barriers at the facility is so obvious as to establish Hometown Buffet's discriminatory intent.[1] On information and belief, Hubbard avers that evidence of this discriminatory intent includes Hometown Buffet's refusal to adhere to relevant building standards; disregard for the building plans and permits issued for the facility; conscientious decision to the architectural layout (as it currently exists) at the facility; decision not to remove barriers from the facility; and allowance that Hometown Buffet's property continues to exist in its non-compliant state.

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[1] E.g., *Gunther v.Lin*, 144 Cal.App.4th 223, fn. 6

Hubbard further alleges, on information and belief, that Hometown Buffet is not in the midst of a remodel, and that the barriers present at the facility are not isolated (or temporary) interruptions in access due to maintenance or repairs.[2]

VI. FIRST CLAIM

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Denial of "Full and Equal" Enjoyment and Use

16. Hubbard incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 15 for this claim.

17. Title III of the ADA holds as a "general rule" that no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment (or use) of goods, services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

18. Hometown Buffet discriminated against Hubbard by denying "full and equal enjoyment" and use of the goods, services, facilities, privileges or accommodations of the Restaurant during each visit and each incident of deterrence.

Failure to Remove Architectural Barriers in an Existing Facility

19. The ADA specifically prohibits failing to remove architectural barriers, which are structural in nature, in existing facilities where such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv). The term "readily achievable" is defined as "easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense." Id. § 12181(9).

20. When an entity can demonstrate that removal of a barrier is not readily achievable, a failure to make goods, services, facilities, or

[2] Id.; 28 C.F.R. § 36.211(b)

accommodations available through alternative methods is also specifically prohibited if these methods are readily achievable. Id. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(v).

21. Here, Hubbard alleges that Hometown Buffet can easily remove the architectural barriers at the Restaurant without much difficulty or expense, and that Hometown Buffet violated the ADA by failing to remove those barriers, when it was readily achievable to do so.

22. In the alternative, if it was not "readily achievable" for Hometown Buffet to remove the Restaurant's barriers, then Hometown Buffet violated the ADA by failing to make the required services available through alternative methods, which are readily achievable.

Failure to Design and Construct an Accessible Facility

23. On information and belief, the Restaurant was designed or constructed (or both) after January 26, 1992—independently triggering access requirements under Title III of the ADA.

24. The ADA also prohibits designing and constructing facilities for first occupancy after January 26, 1993, that aren't readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities when it was structurally practicable to do so. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(1).

25. Here, Hometown Buffet violated the ADA by designing or constructing (or both) the Restaurant in a manner that was not readily accessible to the physically disabled public—including Hubbard—when it was structurally practical to do so.[3]

Failure to Make an Altered Facility Accessible

26. On information and belief, the Restaurant was modified after January 26, 1992, independently triggering access requirements under the ADA.

[3] Nothing within this Complaint should be construed as an allegation that plaintiff is bringing this action as a private attorney general under either state or federal statutes.

27. The ADA also requires that facilities altered in a manner that affects (or could affect) its usability must be made readily accessible to individuals with disabilities to the maximum extent feasible. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2). Altering an area that contains a facility's primary function also requires adding making the paths of travel, bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving that area accessible to the maximum extent feasible. Id.

28. Here, Hometown Buffet altered the Restaurant in a manner that violated the ADA and was not readily accessible to the physically disabled public—including Hubbard—to the maximum extent feasible.

Failure to Modify Existing Policies and Procedures

29. The ADA also requires reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when necessary to afford such goods, services, facilities, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that making such modifications would fundamentally alter their nature. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).

30. Here, Hometown Buffet violated the ADA by failing to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures at the Restaurant, when these modifications were necessary to afford (and would not fundamentally alter the nature of) these goods, services, facilities, or accommodations.

31. Hubbard seeks all relief available under the ADA (*i.e.*, injunctive relief, attorney fees, costs, legal expense) for these aforementioned violations. 42 U.S.C. § 12205.

32. Hubbard also seeks a finding from this Court (*i.e.*, declaratory relief) that Hometown Buffet violated the ADA in order to pursue damages under California's Unruh Civil Rights Act or Disabled Persons Act.

VII. SECOND CLAIM

Disabled Persons Act

33. Hubbard incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 30 for this claim.

34. California Civil Code § 54 states, in part, that: Individuals with disabilities have the same right as the general public to the full and free use of the streets, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings and facilities, and other public places.

35. California Civil Code § 54.1 also states, in part, that: Individuals with disabilities shall be entitled to full and equal access to accommodations, facilities, telephone facilities, places of public accommodation, and other places to which the general public is invited.

36. Both sections specifically incorporate (by reference) an individual's rights under the ADA. See Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d).

37. Here, Hometown Buffet discriminated against the physically disabled public—including Hubbard—by denying them full and equal access to the Restaurant. Hometown Buffet also violated Hubbard's rights under the ADA, and, therefore, infringed upon or violated (or both) Hubbard's rights under the Disabled Persons Act.

38. For each offense of the Disabled Persons Act, Hubbard seeks actual damages (both general and special damages), statutory minimum damages of one thousand dollars ($1,000), declaratory relief, and any other remedy available under California Civil Code § 54.3.

39. She also seeks to enjoin Hometown Buffet from violating the Disabled Persons Act (and ADA) under California Civil Code § 55, and to recover reasonable attorneys' fees and incurred under California Civil Code §§ 54.3 and 55.

VIII. THIRD CLAIM

Unruh Civil Rights Act

40. Hubbard incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 30 for this claim.

41. California Civil Code § 51 states, in part, that: All persons within the jurisdiction of this state are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.

42. California Civil Code § 51.5 also states, in part, that: No business establishment of any kind whatsoever shall discriminate against any person in this state because of the disability of the person.

43. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifically incorporates (by reference) an individual's rights under the ADA into the Unruh Act.

44. Hometown Buffet's aforementioned acts and omissions denied the physically disabled public—including Hubbard—full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges and services in a business establishment (because of their physical disability).

45. These acts and omissions (including the ones that violate the ADA) denied, aided or incited a denial, or discriminated against Hubbard by violating the Unruh Act.

46. Hubbard was damaged by Hometown Buffet's wrongful conduct, and seeks statutory minimum damages of four thousand dollars ($4,000) for each offense.

47. Hubbard also seeks to enjoin Hometown Buffet from violating the Unruh Act (and ADA), and recover reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred under California Civil Code § 52(a).

IX. FOURTH CLAIM

Denial of Full and Equal Access to Public Facilities

48. Hubbard incorporates the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 13 for this claim.

49. Health and Safety Code § 19955(a) states, in part, that: California public accommodations or facilities (built with private funds) shall adhere to the provisions of Government Code § 4450.

50. Health and Safety Code § 19959 states, in part, that: Every existing (non-exempt) public accommodation constructed prior to July 1, 1970, which is altered or structurally repaired, is required to comply with this chapter.

51. Hubbard alleges the Restaurant is a public accommodation constructed, altered, or repaired in a manner that violates Part 5.5 of the Health and Safety Code or Government Code § 4450 (or both), and that the Restaurant was not exempt under Health and Safety Code § 19956.

52. Hometown Buffet's non-compliance with these requirements at the Restaurant aggrieved (or potentially aggrieved) Hubbard and other persons with physical disabilities. Accordingly, she seeks injunctive relief and attorney fees pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 19953.

X. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Hubbard prays judgment against Hometown Buffet for:

1. Injunctive relief, preventive relief, or any other relief the Court deems proper.

2. Declaratory relief that Hometown Buffet violated the ADA for the purposes of Unruh Act or Disabled Persons Act damages.

3. Statutory minimum damages under either sections 52(a) or 54.3(a) of the California Civil Code (but not both) according to proof.

4. Attorneys' fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit.[4]

5. Interest at the legal rate from the date of the filing of this action.

DATED: December 5, 2007

LAW OFFICES OF LYNN HUBBARD

LYNN HUBBARD, III
Attorney for Plaintiff Barbara Hubbard

[4] This includes attorneys' fees under California Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

JS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

FILED 07 DEC -7 PM 3:49 CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS
BARBARA HUBBARD

DEFENDANTS
HOMETOWN BUFFET, INC. dba HOMETOWN BUFFET #0703; LAKHA PROPERTIES - SAN DIEGO, LLC

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff SAN DIEGO
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE LAND INVOLVED.

(c) Attorney's (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
LAW OFFICES OF LYNN HUBBARD (530) 895-3252
12 WILLIAMSBURG LANE CHICO, CA 95926

Attorneys (If Known)
'07 CV 2303 DMS RBB

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- ☒ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
- ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- ☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant) (For Diversity Cases Only)

	PTF	DEF		PTF	DEF
Citizen of This State	☐ 1	☐ 1	Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State	☐ 4	☐ 4
Citizen of Another State	☐ 2	☐ 2	Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State	☐ 5	☐ 5
Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	☐ 3	☐ 3	Foreign Nation	☐ 6	☐ 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT
- ☐ 110 Insurance
- ☐ 120 Marine
- ☐ 130 Miller Act
- ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument
- ☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment
- ☐ 151 Medicare Act
- ☐ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans)
- ☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits
- ☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits
- ☐ 190 Other Contract
- ☐ 195 Contract Product Liability
- ☐ 196 Franchise

REAL PROPERTY
- ☐ 210 Land Condemnation
- ☐ 220 Foreclosure
- ☐ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment
- ☐ 240 Torts to Land
- ☐ 245 Tort Product Liability
- ☐ 290 All Other Real Property

TORTS

PERSONAL INJURY
- ☐ 310 Airplane
- ☐ 315 Airplane Product Liability
- ☐ 320 Assault, Libel & Slander
- ☐ 330 Federal Employers' Liability
- ☐ 340 Marine
- ☐ 345 Marine Product Liability
- ☐ 350 Motor Vehicle
- ☐ 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability
- ☐ 360 Other Personal Injury

PERSONAL INJURY
- ☐ 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice
- ☐ 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability
- ☐ 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability

PERSONAL PROPERTY
- ☐ 370 Other Fraud
- ☐ 371 Truth in Lending
- ☐ 380 Other Personal Property Damage
- ☐ 385 Property Damage Product Liability

CIVIL RIGHTS
- ☐ 441 Voting
- ☐ 442 Employment
- ☐ 443 Housing/ Accommodations
- ☐ 444 Welfare
- ☐ 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment
- ☒ 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other
- ☐ 440 Other Civil Rights

PRISONER PETITIONS
- ☐ 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence
- Habeas Corpus:
- ☐ 530 General
- ☐ 535 Death Penalty
- ☐ 540 Mandamus & Other
- ☐ 550 Civil Rights
- ☐ 555 Prison Condition

FORFEITURE/PENALTY
- ☐ 610 Agriculture
- ☐ 620 Other Food & Drug
- ☐ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881
- ☐ 630 Liquor Laws
- ☐ 640 R.R. & Truck
- ☐ 650 Airline Regs.
- ☐ 660 Occupational Safety/Health
- ☐ 690 Other

LABOR
- ☐ 710 Fair Labor Standards Act
- ☐ 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations
- ☐ 730 Labor/Mgmt.Reporting & Disclosure Act
- ☐ 740 Railway Labor Act
- ☐ 790 Other Labor Litigation
- ☐ 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act

BANKRUPTCY
- ☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158
- ☐ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157

PROPERTY RIGHTS
- ☐ 820 Copyrights
- ☐ 830 Patent
- ☐ 840 Trademark

SOCIAL SECURITY
- ☐ 861 HIA (1395ff)
- ☐ 862 Black Lung (923)
- ☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g))
- ☐ 864 SSID Title XVI
- ☐ 865 RSI (405(g))

FEDERAL TAX SUITS
- ☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant)
- ☐ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609

OTHER STATUTES
- ☐ 400 State Reapportionment
- ☐ 410 Antitrust
- ☐ 430 Banks and Banking
- ☐ 450 Commerce
- ☐ 460 Deportation
- ☐ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations
- ☐ 480 Consumer Credit
- ☐ 490 Cable/Sat TV
- ☐ 810 Selective Service
- ☐ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange
- ☐ 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410
- ☐ 890 Other Statutory Actions
- ☐ 891 Agricultural Acts
- ☐ 892 Economic Stabilization Act
- ☐ 893 Environmental Matters
- ☐ 894 Energy Allocation Act
- ☐ 895 Freedom of Information Act
- ☐ 900Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice
- ☐ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 Original Proceeding
- ☐ 2 Removed from State Court
- ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
- ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened
- ☐ 5 Transferred from another district (specify)
- ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation
- ☐ 7 Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (**Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity**):
42 U.S.C. Section 12101, et seq.
Brief description of cause:
Ongoing violations of the ADA Construction Standards

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
☐ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.C.P. 23
DEMAND $ Excess of $75,000
CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: ☐ Yes ☒ No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER Excess of $75,000

DATE 12/05/2007
SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # 145286 AMOUNT 350. APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

12/7/07

UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO DIVISION

# 145286 - SR

December 07, 2007
15:59:21

Civ Fil Non-Pris
USAO #.: 07CV2303 CIV. FIL.
Judge..: DANA M SABRAW
Amount.: $350.00 CK
Check#.: BC#20523

Total-> $350.00

FROM: HUBBARD V. HOMETOWN BUFFET
CIVIL FILING